

My Friend Luis

Episode 14 — “Jumping to the Wrong Conclusion”

A podcast by Wayne Jacobsen · myfriendluis.com · July 2021

[Advisory: "This episode explores graphic themes of death, violence, and attempted suicide. Please listen at your discretion."]

LUIS: When I got into my town, where I lived, everybody kept looking at me, just talking to themselves — more secretive talking, and then just looking at me. And I ignored everybody. I walked to the house. Outside the house, there's one of the elders. And one of the elders sees me and says, "Weren't you with your dad when this happened? Where were you? Where were you when your father needed you?" I just pointed to the mountain. And then he says, "Talk to me. That's disrespectful. I'm talking to you. Why don't you talk to me?" I pointed to my throat — that I couldn't talk. And then of course he says, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." He said, "Are you supposed to be with your father?" He said, "You're a coward. You're supposed to defend him." I just turned around and looked at him. I was very upset with him.

WAYNE: Hi, I'm Wayne Jacobsen, and this is My Friend Luis — the story of one of the most engaging men I've ever met, and of the friendship that developed between us. It has transformed both of our lives and left us in grateful awe at the adventure of life on this little planet.

In our last episode, Luis, as a 15-year-old kid, watched his father die of a heart attack deep in the mountains, then had to defend his body from the coyotes in an all-night battle. As the new day dawns, he still has to find a way to get his father's remains 14 miles back to his village. He's hungry, exhausted, and without a voice that was shredded from the night's ordeal. All of that will complicate his day in ways he cannot imagine. And in it, he will also find a measure of grace.

LUIS: When I started seeing a little bit more, I heard the coyote — the second coyote I shot. I heard him kind of like still making noises and struggling, and kind of like shaking violently. I stood up. I put my father on the ground, but then he was kind of like getting stiff. I remember thinking that, oh, he's not going to fit on a coffin correctly, so I tried to straight him up, pretty much straight as I could. I walked to this second coyote I shot, and when I saw it, it was huge. It was humongous compared to the other one. When I saw him, I was so enraged. I was so mad at this coyote. I want him to suffer. I wanted to kill him, but not just to kill him in a peaceful, fast way. No, no — I want him to suffer.

So at first, when I walk up to the animal, I put my right knee on top of his chest, and the animal screamed. And then I grab his head with my left hand, and I grab the gun with my right, and I couldn't even take the safety off, because my finger was broken. So I remember using the other hand, and then I grabbed the head, and I was just about to shoot the coyote on the head when it hit me, and I said, no, no, no, no, no, no. No, you don't deserve this. You deserve to die a slow and painful death. You deserve to feel what I felt throughout the night. You did this to me. I'm going to make you pay.

So I put the gun away and I pulled my knife. I stuck the knife on his chest and I started cutting through, and you could hear the animal screaming, both pain and fear. I look at the animal in the eyes — I could see its fear — and all of a sudden it hit me: I was that coyote hours before, in such fear and such terror. I know I said that I wanted him to feel what I felt, and I know I want them to suffer. But all of a sudden, I got so much compassion for the animal and so much sympathy for her. I pulled the knife out of his chest, and then when I look at it, I said, oh — I said, "Friend, I wish we would have met in different circumstances. I could have been your friend, and I could have fed you" — and not like a pet. I told him, "You could have been my friend." And then I looked at him again and I said, "Don't worry, I'm going to take you off of your misery."

So I pulled the gun again, and then I said, "You did what you had to do, and I did what I had to do. In your mind, I was just preventing you from eating, from taking a meal, and in my mind, I was defending my father. You did what a coyote is supposed to do, and I did what a human is supposed to do." So I said, "Goodbye, friend. I wish we would have met in different circumstances." I pointed the gun at its head. I pulled the trigger. The animal shook for like five seconds, and all of a sudden stopped.

I picked up the animal, and when I picked it up, I could feel the fleas crawling through my arms and jumping on my face. I didn't care. So I picked it up, and I saw this kind of like bush, and I kind of put it under that bush. And then I went to pick up the other one, and the other one was already dead. I picked that up and I put it on top of the first one. Then I looked at my father and continued to cry.

I could see now the path, so I picked up my dad and I started to carry him. It was really hard to carry now, because he was more stiff and he was more like an upright position. I was trying to carry him the best I could. I picked him up, and as I started walking, I heard noises. I stopped and I pay attention to the noises, and I could hear people talking, and I got really happy. Maybe about a hundred yards down, there's a fork on the road, where the road separates for a place where you can go with animals on the mountain — it's less treacherous. Then if you go straight up, it's shorter, but it's more — it's really treacherous for animals. So I wanted to beat them to the fork, because I said, if they have horses, they're going to go to the fork and I'm going to miss them. So I kind of like hurried down, try to get my dad, and I keep stumbling down the mountain. He was really heavy. I felt extremely weak. I was dehydrated, I was really hungry, really thirsty. I put my dad down, and I went up on a rock to look down, and I saw them, and they were going down the fork of the road.

I couldn't scream at them, I couldn't talk, I couldn't ask for help. So what I did — I pulled the gun, pointed towards the mountain, and I pulled the trigger. When they hear the gunshot, I could hear them — there were two kids, one about my age — I was like 14, 15 at the time — and the other kid was older than me, like 17 years old, and they had two mules with them. And I could hear the father of the two kids screaming and saying, "Don't shoot, don't shoot! We're not part of a drug cartel. Don't shoot. We're just farmers. I'm here with my children. Please don't shoot." And I couldn't scream at him and say, hey, I'm not shooting at you. I just want to get your attention. I just need you to help me.

The guy kind of like runs back to the road, and he's waving his hands at me, and then he sees me. And then when he sees me, I'm waving, but I still have the gun on my hand. He looked at me. He noticed I was young — I was 15. And he was screaming at me, saying, "What is wrong with you, kid? Why are you shooting at us?" I keep waving at him to come and see me, and he says, "What? What do you want?" So he walks a little bit closer to me, but he's very apprehensive, because I have the gun on my hand. So what I did, so he can see — I pulled the clip out, and then I chambered the bullet, put the gun on my waist, so he can feel more at peace. And then I keep waving at him, and I keep pointing to the ground, and he doesn't know what I'm talking about.

He comes closer. I run down and I pick up my dad so he can see, and I'm pointing at my dad. And then when he sees that, he walks towards me, and he says — he says, "Who's that?" I said, it's my dad. He says, "Is he dead?" I nodded, I said yes. He said, "Wait — how did he die?" And I just keep pointing at the chest, at the chest. And then he says, "Oh — pain?" I just said yes, from pain. And then he says, "Did you spend all night here?" I nodded. "How did you survive here at night? Nobody does that. Not even the cartels venture at night. Really?" I just keep pointing at my dad and keep asking him for help, and I keep telling him to come and help me. And when he noticed what I was trying to tell him, he says, "No, no, no, no, no. I'm not going to help you." He says, "I want nothing to do with this. No, no, no, no. I'm out of here." I know how to plead, so I put my hands here, next to me, like this — pleading, like this — and say, please, please help me. And then he says, "Okay, I'll help you, but only down the mountain. But I'll do it if you give me the gun." I shook my head no.

I called the man to where I had the coyotes, and I pointed to the coyotes. Coyotes — you can sell the fur; some people sell the meat; and you can take the head to the local ranchers and they'll pay you. They give you money — they kill their cattle, so they reward you with money for each head that you take. I showed him the coyotes, signaling that you can have them if you help me. And all of a sudden, he actually went higher, by saying, "Okay, I'll take the coyotes and I'll take the gun, and I'll help you." And then I shook my head no, and the guy kept saying, "No? Then I can't help you." At that moment, I was so desperate that I was just about to pull the gun. I wasn't gonna kill him, but I was gonna point it at him and tell him, you better help me. All of a sudden, the guy changes mind, and he says, "Okay, I'll take the two coyotes, but I'm gonna help you only down the mountain. That's it." Yeah — okay, okay, I'll take that, I'll take that.

So he gets one of the mules ready while I bring my father's remains down the mountain. And when we're putting my father on top of the mule, when I first noticed the damage he received from the coyotes, and how they ripped through his calf, his ankle — I started crying, but no tears will come out. And it was really painful even try to talk or try to make any sounds. We made the slow walk down the mountain, and by the time we got out of the canopy, you could see now much better — much better — and you could see a little bit of the sun coming up on the horizon.

He helped me all the way down, and he wanted to leave my father's body kind of away from the road. I signal him — all the way to the road, all the way to the road. We go down. He says, "Okay, you get him down." So I got my father down. I keep looking at the area where he was bitten by the coyotes — it was really bad. So I kind of cover it with his pants, and I pull a little bit of weeds and then kind of put them on

the area so nobody sees them. The guy looked at me. He says, "Okay, kid." He says, "Good luck." He says, "I'm sorry about your dad." He says, "But I'm taking the coyotes." So I just nodded yes, and he left.

Then I started looking around, and I didn't see anybody. So I tried to pick up my dad. When I was picking him up, I heard voices. I looked down on the road so I can get a better view of who it was, and I recognized the person — it was somebody who lives on the same town I lived. And then I waved my hands. At first he didn't pay any attention to me. I keep waving my hands until he saw me. He says, with an attitude, "What do you want?" And then I waved to come — hurry. Then I pointed at my dad on the ground. He knew who my dad was. He looked at him and he says, "Oh — is he dead?" I nodded yes. Then he said, "When?" So I was trying to tell him, you know, last night — and then I pointed to the mountain. He said, "He died in the mountain?" Then I nodded yes. He said, "Wait — you spend all the night in the mountain with him?" Again I nodded yes. He said, "What happened?" Then I pointed again to the mountain. He says, "No, no, no — tell me what happened." And then I pointed to my throat — I can't talk. He says, "Why?" I shook my head, saying, I don't know. So he said, "Wait right here. Let me — let me go get help."

So he was running around trying to find people, and they were planning, okay, how can we take him over there. But then I noticed one of his shoes was missing. In my mind, I wanted to take him complete, right? I felt like, you know, he had to have his shoe. So I tapped the guy who first helped me, and then I pointed, telling him that — that I was going to go find the shoe. So I started walking carefully, because the grass was kind of high — I didn't want to miss it. So I started walking on the same trail we came in. I kept walking and walking until we got, I don't know, maybe 150 yards, maybe. I found it.

I remember that, before I found it, I heard noises, like a truck or something, and people talking. There was a tree, so I couldn't really see beyond the trees. And as I was coming down, I noticed what was happening: there was a truck, and they were putting my father in the back of the truck, to take him back home. So I started running towards them, and I was so weak that I kept stumbling and falling. I picked myself up. By the time I went down there, they took off, and I couldn't scream at them to tell them, stop, stop, you're leaving me behind — stop! No, they just took off, and they were in a hurry. So I ran on the road, and I could see the truck getting lost on the dust and on the distance, and then went into a curve. And I kept running and running, to the point that I couldn't run anymore. And again, I started crying. My tongue kept getting stuck on the roof of my mouth, so I could use my fingers to try to unstick it.

So I kept walking. I saw this little puddle on the side of the road — some people use the water from the mountain; they have little dams, I think they call; they use it to water their little fields. I got close to the puddle and used my head. That's when I first — I saw the damage I had on my hands. My wrist was purple, and then my fingers were getting like really swollen and purplish, and also my other hand too. And I couldn't move them — they were really swollen. It was really painful. So I used my right hand and I started scooping water and put it on my mouth. And when I was putting it on my mouth, it tasted like really bitter. I swallowed the first time, and it was so painful. And then I grab another one, and then I start spitting it, and I noticed that I was spitting kind of like blood mixed with water. That was the damage down on my throat. And so today, if, you know, you hear my voice gargling like that — since then, it was never the same. When I was scooping the water, I noticed that there were tadpoles in there, and I was so hungry that

I started eating the tadpoles. I ate three of them. I couldn't take any more.

I made my way home, running sometimes, walking. I had to pass two towns, and you have to go through the middle of them. And as I walked by it, my back, it's all bloody. Everybody thought I was shot, because you could see the rips on the shirt and then the holes in there — but it was from the coyotes biting. And people kept asking me questions, like, "Where were you? Did you know that your father is dead?" And I keep nodding yes, and I just keep walking. And people go like, "Hey — then your father just died?" And I keep nodding yes. And they keep saying, "What are you doing here?" I couldn't answer to them anyways, so I started just ignoring them. Next town I passed, the same thing.

When I got into my town, where I lived, everybody kept looking at me, just talking to themselves — more secretive talking, and then just looking at me. And I ignored everybody. I went through there because that's the only way you could go through. If I could have evaded that, I would have. I walked to the house, and the first thing I saw — I saw a lot of people there. And outside the house, there's one of the elders. And one of the elders sees me and says, "Weren't you with your dad when this happened? Where were you? Where were you when your father needed you?" I just pointed to the mountain. And then he says, "Talk to me. That's disrespectful. I'm talking to you. Why don't you talk to me?" And then of course he says, "Yeah." He said that, "You're supposed to be with your father." He said, "You're a coward. You're supposed to defend him." I just turned around and looked at him. I was very upset with him. I didn't want to make a big deal there, so I just kept walking.

When I walked, I heard people screaming, "Luis is back! Luis is here! Luis is here!" And then my mother came out running. I thought she came running to see if I was okay. I thought she came running to embrace me or hug me. She came in running towards me, and she stopped about ten feet away from me. Then she slowly walked, and I just stand there, and then I opened my arms to give her a hug. I thought she was going to give me a hug — but she slapped me. She slapped me on the face, and she says, "Where were you when your father needed you the most? Where were you when he was dying up in that mountain, when he was in agony? Where were you?" I just pointed to the mountain. She says, "Talk to me. Why don't you talk to me?" I pointed at my throat. She says, "Why don't you talk? Talk!" I pointed inside my mouth. She just shook her head in disagreement, and she was crying. And she said, "When your father needed you the most, where were you?" I pointed again to the mountain. Then she turned around and left.

I was very hungry. I thought she was going to say, "My son, can I feed you something? Can I give you something?" She was very upset. She was in a lot of pain too, of course. And me not being able to talk or explain things — that didn't go very well for me either. And there was no one there to defend me, or say something in my favor.

So what I did — the lake, it was very close to my house. I was just walking through the water, and it was about almost chest high. I submerged myself on the water, and I started screaming inside the water — screaming. I didn't want anybody to hear me, so I just started screaming, and it was so painful. It was so painful. At that point, I was like, I don't care if I drown. I don't really care. I kept screaming in there. And then, when I was there in the lake, I was taking sips of water, kind of like trying to gargle, and then spitting

it, and it was nothing but just blood. Blood. It was really painful.

So I came out of the water, and as I was walking back in the house, the same elder approached me, and he kind of like confronted me, saying, "Look at that. On top of that, you're doing this? Don't you know that your mother works very hard, and you're getting wet like that, just like that, so your mother can wash your clothes again? Really?" I looked at him again, and I just turned my back on him and walked. And then he says, "What's that you have in the back? Did you fall down running away? How come you have blood on your back? What is that? You probably fall down running away from the coyotes, right? Away from the mountain?" I turned around and I took some steps towards him — and I controlled myself. I just walked inside.

At that time, I had only three t-shirts: one for work — that was it, the one I was wearing — another one for, like, you know, less special events, and the third one for very special events, the nicest one. And only one was available. So I took off the wet shirt, and then, when I took the shirt off, I looked on the side of the shoulder and I felt the flesh — it was ripped. I used the shirt to kind of like dab the area. I was still bleeding. I put on the other shirt, and I was bleeding over it, and I felt bad, because these people are gonna — now you got the other shirt dirty. But the pants I left — that was really wet.

Then I walked up to my dad, and he was on the floor. They put a blanket, and then his body was there. So I just sit right there. I sit there, and I sit there for hours, just looking at him and crying — but no tears come out. I was really dehydrated.

Then I went down to the lake again, and when I was there, I was reaching for the water so I can drink a little bit from the lake, and I felt steps behind me. And I heard this voice behind me that said, "I'm sorry about your dad." I mean, I recognized the voice. I know who it was. Yes. And then she said again, "I'm sorry about your dad." I nodded again. Then she said, "I got you this. This fish was my fish, for me, but I ate half, and I kept the other half for you." That was my wife, Maria. She wasn't my wife, of course, at the time — she wasn't even my girlfriend. I just nodded. I meant to say thank you, not just nodded. "Okay, it's okay. I'll take the plate back. I'll stay here." And I couldn't convince her to go. I wanted to be alone, but she didn't ask much questions. She didn't ask what happened. She was just there, and that really comforted me.

So I started eating. As I was eating, she says, "Oh, I brought salsa." She says, "It's a bit spicy." I didn't want to be disrespectful. Even just the fish, it was really painful, so I was being really careful. And she says, "Oh, do you have, like, a sore throat?" And then I nodded yes — I said yes. So I finished the food. I felt strong after eating; I felt the difference. And then I grabbed the little plate — it was made out of plastic, this hard plastic — and then I walked like two or three paces, really close to the lake, and I was just about to wash it, and then she says, "No, no, no, don't worry about it." She said, "Are you going to be here later on?" She said, "I can bring you dinner." And then I shook no — I said no. I meant to say, it's okay, I'll be fine, it's okay. Then she said, "Oh, no, no — I'll bring you some, and I want to see if I can find something for your throat." I nodded. I meant to say, thank you — you know, that really helped me. Yes. She was the same age as I was — 15.

I went back to the house, and I just sit right next to my father's remains. And then people came in and put my father in a coffin. You know, somebody called my brothers, from wherever they lived here in the U.S. They — right away, they found a plane to go back. Some came in the 25th, and others came in on the 26th. The doctor had to prepare my father so he could last that long. First of all, my two older brothers — they were next to me in age — and then the other one above him came in. When I saw them, I was sitting in a corner. I couldn't say anything, but, you know, just thinking about what happened. The captain wasn't even there — he was on a mission.

When I saw my older brother, I stood up and I walked towards him, and he saw me. He says, "There you are" — but he said it in a violent way. And I didn't know — I didn't know he was going to do that. But as I approached him, I opened my arms to give him a hug, and when I opened my arms, he punched me right on the face, as hard as he could. And then he says, "Where were you when my father needed you? That's why you're here — that you were here to protect him. Where were you?" I looked down the floor, and then I pointed to the mountain. "You coward." Then I looked at him, and I wanted to tell him, I was at the mountain with him — where were you? And then he approached me again. He tried to punch me again. I unloaded on him. I don't know what happened to me — I got really blinded by anger, and right next to my father's remains, we're fighting. After I punched him three times on the face and he goes down, he went stronger — he tried to take me down and beat me. But as soon as he opened his arms, tried to grab me, I punched him three times again, and he went down also.

And then everybody's making a huge deal — you know, the women of the town all screaming and crying. My mom runs in, and she says, "Your father's death still so fresh — fighting your own brothers, beating up your own brothers, right next to his casket?" I was so hurt. I was so deeply wounded — not just because of what happened also, but the rejection, and the way they acted, as if I didn't matter. So I hid the gun from everybody, and then I looked around — when she was saying that, I looked around, because there was more people. Then I looked around and pointed to them — tell her, you saw what happened; they attacked me; I defend myself; tell them. There was nobody found to defend me. Nobody. I just look around me, and my brothers — they were helping each other up, and then looking at me with this anger. I pushed them off. I went to pick up the gun, and then I walked into the forest.

I found a spot right behind a tree, and when I was there, I remember pulling the gun. And it was — so, even when I punched my brother, I did so much damage to my hand and my fingers, I made it so worse. I felt the pain shooting up my arm. At this point, I couldn't even close my hand. And while I was there — that time, I wasn't going to fail. That time, I was going to kill myself. Nobody cares about me. Nobody loves me. What do I have to live for? I said, I'm going to give them what they want. They want me dead.

Before that, I put a note — it wasn't a note; it was more like a letter. And the letter — I explained what happened at the mountain, because I couldn't talk. So when anybody was asking me what happened, I was like, read the letter — I was pointing at the letter. That didn't work very well in my favor, because most people in there, they can't read. They can't. So they said, "Read it to me." I was like, oh — if I could have talked, I could tell you, instead of read it to you. And I put it there, and then one of my brothers was so angry that he ripped that off the wall.

I made the decision to go die in the forest and take my life. I sit down, and I keep crying and sobbing. And in my mind, I was like, I'm not going to wait for the voice to come in — because I know, I said, I know the voice is going to try to get me off of it. But not this time. It was more like a revenge towards my family. I said, okay, they want that? I'll give them that. I was just about to pull the trigger when I heard steps behind me, and I felt my friend's presence. Later on, he told me that it's not his presence — it's actually Holy Spirit's presence. He goes under the guidance and under the protection of Holy Spirit — the feeling I feel. So he says, "It's not of mine — it's God's." So I felt him, and then I knew who he was. I knew it was Raphael.

I stood up — I was struggling to stand up, because I was weak, and then my arm — I couldn't really support myself with my hand. And when I saw him, I was really, really angry at him. I looked at him and I started screaming at him — kind of like making noises, making noises — trying to tell him to go away, waving my hands: get out of here, get out of here. And then he just looked at me, and he said, "The pain is so unbearable. That's why I'm here — to help you." And in my mind, I was like, yeah — where were you that night before? Where were you when everybody was talking to me like this? But then I knew that he could understand what I think. So we started this conversation. He reassured me that he was there. He reassured me that the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit were there, and he was there with them. He says, "There was a battle going on for your soul. There was a battle of the spiritual that you didn't see — that we were fighting on your behalf."

I remember raising the gun, and then grabbing it with my right — and then, remember that the recoil was going to be so brutal on my arm, I switched to the left. I was going to shoot at him. I was trying to shoot Raphael. And I couldn't do that. I couldn't do it. He didn't try to stop me. He didn't say, don't do it. Later on, I told him, hey, I was just about to shoot you. And he says, "Yeah, it would have been a waste of a bullet anyways." When I couldn't shoot him, I put the gun down, and then I tried to approach him, and I was trying to punch him — and I couldn't punch him. I couldn't attack him. All I did — I just broke. I broke. He embraced me, and when he hugged me, for the first time I could shed tears. I don't know if I was hydrated again — I don't know. I could feel the tears coming down my cheeks, and I could feel this emotion, like I could let something out. He embraced me for maybe 10, 15 minutes, not saying a thing — just hugging me.

And then, after I composed myself, he walks back to a bush, bends down, picks up water — bottled water. He picks it up, and he opens it, and he says, "Drink this." So I drank it. As I was drinking it, I was being very careful when I was drinking, because it was really painful. But I was drinking it — it was very soothing. It wasn't painful, but it was really refreshing. And I felt like a dry sponge when it gets wet. I felt hydrated. I felt strong. But I couldn't talk still. With him, I could communicate just by thinking, and he could talk, or he could just think also — but most of the time, he talked. He was telling me — he says, "Look, the date, it's already been set, when you're gonna be healed from all of this guilt."

After I had that encounter with Rafa in the woods, he actually told me — he says, "Captain Herrera is coming. By the time you get home, he's gonna be there waiting for you." He says, "So go home now. He knows about your dad." I went home, and then I saw Captain, and he was there waiting for me. And when

he saw me, he ran towards me. He no longer called me Luis from that moment forward. Also, Rafa started calling me son. So my father passed; they called me Luis — they called me son. He said, "I'm sorry about your loss, son. I'm sorry." He was apologizing to me for not being there for me at that moment. He says, "I wish I was in the mountains with you. I wish I was." He says, "I'm so sorry I wasn't there." And I just keep nodding — yes, yes, yes. And then he says, "What's wrong?" And then I pointed at my throat. I had my hand kind of like hanging down, and then he looks and says, "What's this?" And then he sees the blood on my back, and he says, "What's that?" He calls the medic.

In Mexico, the medic for the army — they don't call him medic, because medic is a translation of *médico*, which means a doctor, and they're not doctors. So they call him Sanidad, which means healing. So he screams the word "healing" — the medic, or doc, of the company, he knows it's him. So he runs to the front and said, "Yes, sir." Everywhere he go, there were about 30 of them, but only about 12 of them, or 14, were selected, that were around him always — those 14. Everywhere he went, they set up a perimeter, because he was a high target too, and to protect everybody there too.

He was very upset. He looks at my mom and he says, "Have you noticed this? Have you noticed that? Have you checked him? Have you taken him to the doctor? Did you even ask him how this happened?" My mom just said, "Well, with all the pain we're going through, it slipped my mind." And he just says, "Look, I understand your pain, and I respect you. But if you're not going to take care of him, give him to me, and I'll take care of him. Okay?" And then he calls the medic: "Take him to the base." He says, "Take X-rays, everything, and check his back, and check why he can't talk." One of the soldiers says, "How are we going to compensate for it?" Because, you know, you have to have — if somebody is broke, and they have to say, okay, who is — because all that costs money. Captain says, "I'll sign for it." He says, "Put it on my tab. I'll pay for it." And then the medic says, "That wouldn't be necessary, sir." He says, "There's not going to be no report." He says, "Okay. Thank you."

So he took me in. He X-rays the arm. He says, "There's a fracture here." And he kind of fixed it, because he says the bone kind of like was overlapping — I don't know what he meant by that. So he fixed it. He says, "It's going to hurt, okay?" So he just pushed it, and something popped. And then he put a cast on it, and then on my fingers — he put these things on my fingers. He looked at my throat, and then he said, "This is beyond me. Throat — I don't know what it is." He says, "You need a specialist for that. Okay?" So I said okay. He gave me this medication — it was like the equivalent to Advil. "Take one right now." So he gave me one, and that really helped. That really took the pain away.

Took me back home, and then Captain was there, and he walked up to the medic, and he says, "What's the report?" And he says, "He has these big three fingers broken. Forearm here," he says, "it's broken." He says, "Okay. How long before he heals?" He says, "Oh," he says, "maybe, I don't know, three, four months. Maybe — I don't know. It's a lot." So he says okay. He looked at me. He says, "I'm canceling all of your fights." I was kind of like mad about it, because I wanted to fight. All of that time that I couldn't fight, he was teaching me, up on the mountains, how to, you know, track — how do they track — special forces stuff.

I felt three types of guilt. And the first one was not being able to get my father out of that mountain — that was a huge guilt, a huge burden to carry. The second one, it was not being able to protect him. I felt very responsible, because the animals bit him — I couldn't even prevent it. And the third one was because the last memory I have of my father — talking to him, and him talking back to me — it was that I got into an argument with him. I got into a fight with him. That was really eating me alive. I was — I was horrible. Until December 19th, 1994, at the border. God didn't just save me from the pain I was feeling at the moment, but he took a lot of that guilt — all that guilt — away from me.

WAYNE: That's still almost seven years away.

LUIS: Yes.

WAYNE: This experience — you had night terrors?

LUIS: Oh yes. Almost every night.

WAYNE: So even though Raphael comes to you, and you have this moment of hugging, that doesn't really let God into your life in a way that you knew who God was and could walk with him. You still were all alone in this pain for about seven more years. And then you still have this incident with Captain Herrera's men kidnapping you in the mountains, and there's still stuff that goes on in your life that's horrendous. And you have all this guilt that you didn't do enough for your dad. I know when you told me the story, you said those mountains are a monument to your failure. That's a long time to carry them.

LUIS: I was raised in a way that you suppress those things and you don't let them out. You should suppress them — that's what a man does. And then, part of that engagement at the border — all that guilt go away. It didn't bother me, if you will. I didn't have the night terrors after that. The night terrors — I didn't have those anymore.

WAYNE: Despite these incredible encounters Luis experienced, he had no one to help him process the trauma of that night or its aftermath. He bore the false guilt of not being able to rescue his father, and the false accusations of a family and a village that did not want to know his story. And even though God was actively engaged in those events, Luis had no one to show him what that meant, or how to respond to him. It would take another 29 years before he would venture to tell that story to someone else and process the emotions he'd buried for so long. And that's when his old friend Rafa appears — and that encounter would tie together a number of loose ends. Next time, on *My Friend Luis*...

LUIS: And I know it's him. I know he's behind me. And I just close my eyes and started remembering how I saw — like you and I, you know, not this mystical being, or — he's not fluorescent — like a person, like you and me. So I start remembering all those moments I spent with him. All of a sudden, he says, "If you view me like that, then you can turn around and see me." And when I turn around, I saw him.

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